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Rural District Council.

MINISTRY OF HEALTH LIBRARY

ANNUAL REPORT

OF THE

Medical Officer of Health.

FOR THE YEAR 1948.

CROOK
LINTONS, PRINTERS, CHURCH STREET.

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Weardale Rural District Council.

Report of Medical Officer of Health for 1948.

LADIES AND GENTLEMEN,

Herewith I beg to submit my Annual Report for 1948.

SECTION A.

Statistics and Social Conditions.

Area of District, 99,652 Acres.

Registrar-General's estimate of population, 9,020.

Number of inhabited houses at end of year.2,938.

Rateable Value, £45,349.

Sum represented by a penny rate, £178 9s. 0d.

Employment continued good throughout the year. Wolsingham Steel Works maintained its rate of production. Limestone. ganister and sand quarries have maintained a good rate of production. Lime for agricultural purposes is still produced at Broadwood and Stanhope Burn.

In Stanhope Dene, Fluorspar Limited are still expanding and increasing the number of employees.

Messrs. Geo. Blair & Co. (Tow Law) have converted an old engine shed into a small foundry for light castings.

Wages have maintained their high level and there has been no destitution.

Vital Statistics.

BIRTHS

There were 116 total births (alive and still)

Live Births	...	114
Still Births	...	2
		116

LIVE BIRTHS.

		Male	Female
Legitimate	...	51	56
Illegitimate	...	5	2
		56	58

STILL BIRTHS

Legitimate	...	2	0
Illegitimate	...	0	0
		2	0

On an estimated population of 9,020 these figures give the following rates for 1,000 population :—

Total Births	...	12 8
Live Births	...	12.6
Still Births	...	0.2

The rates for England and Wales were : –

Live Births	...	17.9 per 1,000 population.
Still Births	...	0.42 per 1,000 population.

The birth rate has dropped from 17.3 per 1,000 in 1947. The still birth rate has again dropped (1946-1.2 per 1,000, 1947-0.5 per 1,000.)

DEATHS.

The number of deaths registered as pertaining to this district were :—

Males	...	61
Females	...	50
Total	...	111

These figures give a total death rate per 1,000 population of 12.3. The death rate for England and Wales was 10.8 per 1,000 population

MATERNAL DEATHS.

There was one maternal death during the year. The cause was Acute Yellow Atrophy of Liver.

INFANTILE DEATHS.

These numbered 4 and were as follows :—

		Male	Female
Legitimate	...	2	2
Illegitimate	...	0	0
Total	...	2	2

These figures give a mortality rate of per 1 000 Live Births of 35, an increase of 15.

The rate for England and Wales is 34 per 1,000 Live Births.

DEATHS FROM CANCER.

These numbered 14, which represents 12.6 per cent of all deaths and a cancer death rate of 1.6 per 1,000 population.

DEATHS FROM MEASLES.	Nil.
DEATHS FROM WHOOPING COUGH,	Nil.
DEATHS FROM DIARRHOEA (under 2 years)	Nil.

CAUSES OF DEATH

	CAUSES OF DEATH	Males.	Females.
	All Causes	61	50
1	Typhoid and Paratyphoid fever ...	0	0
2	Cerebro-spinal fever	0	0
3	Scarlet Fever	0	0
4	Whooping Cough	0	0
5	Diphtheria	0	0
6	Tuberculosis, respiratory	6	3
7	Other Tuberculosis	1	0
8	Syphilitic diseases	0	0
9	Influenza	0	0
10	Measles	0	0
11	Polio-myelitis and Polio-encephalitis ..	0	0
12	Infantile Encephalitis	0	0
13	Cancer of buccal cavity & oesophagus (M)	1	-
	Cancer of uterus (F)	-	0
14	Cancer of stomach & duodenum ..	4	1
15	Cancer of breast	0	1
16	Cancer of other sites	4	3
17	Diabetes	1	4
18	Intra-cranial vascular lesions	10	7
19	Heart disease	14	16
20	Other circulatory diseases	3	5
21	Bronchitis	1	1
22	Pneumonia	2	2
23	Other respiratory diseases	1	0
24	Ulcer of stomach & duodenum ..	0	0
25	Diarrhœa (under 2 years)	0	0
26	Appendicitis	0	0
27	Other digestive diseases	0	1
28	Nephritis	0	3
29	Puerperal & post-abortion sepsis ..	0	0
30	Other maternal causes	0	1
31	Premature birth	2	1
32	Congen. malformation, birth injury and infantile diseases	0	1
33	Suicide	1	0
34	Road traffic accidents	1	0
35	Other violent causes	4	0
36	All other causes	5	0
	Total	61	50

Appended are the birth rates and death rates for the preceeding seven years : –

	Birthrate	Deathrate
1941	14.2	12.9
1942	12.7	11.2
1943	13.6	12.9
1944	16.7	14.2
1945	11.4	10.8
1946	17.3	14.1
1947	17.3	14.1
1948	12.8	12.3

SECTION B-

General Provision of Health Services.

PUBLIC HEALTH STAFF.

MEDICAL.

Medical Officer of Health (part-time)
DONALD THOMSON, O.B.E., M.B.

Tuberculosis Medical Officer
Venereal Diseases Medical Officer
School Medical Officer
Maternity and Child Welfare Medical Officer
Obstetric Consultants
} Under Durham County Council

OTHERS

Sanitary Inspector,
R. G SUDDICK, Cert. R.S.I., Lond. (whole time)

Veterinary Surgeon
Public Analyst
Health Visitor
} Under Durham Connty Council.

LABORATORY FACILITIES.

Bacteriological examinations of sputum, throat swabs and blood for diagnosis of Tuberculosis, Diphtheria and Typhoid-Fever are carried out at the Public Health Laboratories, Ponteland Road, Newcastle-on-Tyne, 5. In addition, other examinations are carried out when necessary, e g. Examination of urine and faeces and virulence tests. This valuable work is carried out at the expense of the Durham County Council

Every practitioner in the District can make use of these facilities and a copy of every report is sent to the Medical Officer of Health.

During the year 98 such examinations were carried out.

The bacteriological examinations for the Isolation Hospital were done by the Clinical Research Association, London until 5th. July, when the work was transferred to the Newcastle Laboratory.

During the year 2 such examinations were carried out.

AMBULANCE FACILITIES.

(i) Most householders in the District subscribed 5/- per annum to the Weardale Ambulance Association, whose motor ambulance was stationed at St. John's Chapel. This entitled each household to four journeys per year to Newcastle-on-Tyne at a cost of 5/- per journey Journeys were made only with bona fide stretcher cases.

(ii) For the transport of cases of Infectious Diseases a motor ambulance was maintained by this Council at its Isolation Hospital

(iii) The quarry workers, through their union, had a separate arrangement for the services of a motor ambulance car from Tow Law for stretcher cases and payment of train, bus, or taxi fares for less serious cases. These facilities were available to the workers and their families.

(iv.) Wolsingham Steel Works have provided their own ambulance which has been made available to the families of employees living in Wolsingham and Frosterley. This arrangement still continues

(v) At Hunstanworth, a local association existed which provided at reduced charges the private hire of an ambulance to its subscribers when required.

(vi) As from 5th. July, 1948, the entire Ambulance Service was transferred to Durham County Council by the National Health Service Act The District is served mainly by a Control Post in Bishop Auckland. The areas of Hunstanworth and Edmundbyers are served from a Control Post in Consett.

NURSING IN THE HOME.

The whole of the Area with the exception of Stanhope and the sparsely inhabited neighbourhood of Hunstanworth is provided with district Nurse-Midwives, working under local Nursing Associations. These are all affiliated to and subsidised by the Durham County Nursing Association. At Stanhope, the general nursing is done by a district nurse, who is not maternity trained. Maternity cases are attended by the County Council Midwife stationed at Frosterley.

At Hunstanworth, a local Association subscribes to the neighbouring association in Northumberland and thus have the services of the Carterway Heads Nurse Midwife when required.

TREATMENT CENTRES

Maternity and Child Welfare centres are in operation at Wolsingham, Stanhope, and St. John s Chapel. A Venereal Diseases Clinic at Durham, and a Tuberculosis Clinic at Bishop Auckland are available for the District. These are all under County Council control.

HOSPITALS.

There is no general hospital in the area. By far the greater part of the cases requiring hospital treatment are sent to the Royal Victoria Infirmary, Newcastle-upon-Tyne, which receives a fair amount of support from the District.

In Durham City, Dryburn Hospital and the Durham County Hospital received an increasing number of patients from this district. Since 5th. July 1948, a General Hospital has been opened in Bishop Auckland.

Section C.

Sanitary Circumstances and General Provisions of Health Services in the Area.

WATER SUPPLIES.

Rainfall during 1948 appeared to be below average, but despite this, no shortage of water was experienced, and the supplies were well maintained.

The following improvements were carried out : –

Rookhope - Extension of 3in main to serve new housing estate, a distance of 180 yards.

Westgate - Extension of 3in. main to serve new housing estate, a distance of 150 yards.

Repairs to mains and services were carried out by your workmen on 126 instances.

SEWERAGE AND DRAINAGE.

Minor improvements were effected to the various sewage works during the year, including digging over and re-levelling land used for treatment, re-arrangement of feeder channels and clearing and relaying land drains.

One lagoon at Stanhope was completely cleaned out and re drained and fresh facilities provided for clearing and depositing sludge. Work on a second lagoon and new sludge pit had been commenced by the year end.

One extra attendant was engaged on routine maintenance during the year.

55 stoppages in sewers and 21 in drains were cleared by your workmen during the year.

RURAL WATER SUPPLIES AND SEWERAGE ACT 1945.

Further work was undertaken in the preparation and revision of schemes of Water Supply and Sewerage in various parts of the district.

RIVERS AND STREAMS.

Complaints were investigated in company with the County Health Inspector.

CLOSET ACCOMMODATION.

The closets of each type remaining at the end of 1948 are :-

Water Closets	...	1379
Ash-Closets	...	857
Ashpit-Privies	...	293

Eighteen applicants took advantage of the Council's scheme allowing a grant of half the cost, up to a maximum of £8, for converting existing sanitary accommodation to the water carriage system, 24 closets being converted.

PUBLIC CLEANSING.

SALVAGE.

The collection of salvage (paper, rags. scrap iron etc.) was continued during the year and the amounts sold were as follows :-

Paper . 40 tons 4 cwts. 1 qr.

The Council entered the competition organised by the National Waste Paper Recovery Association and were awarded a prize of £50. Thanks are due to the splendid co-operation of schools and Women's Organisations, which was largely responsible for the success of the effort.

REFUSE REMOVAL.

The organisation of the Cleansing Service was further assisted during the year by the completion of part of the proposed new garages and stores at the Council Offices, enabling all the vehicles to be kept in one place.

The estimated weight of refuse removed during the year was 3 600 tons and the mileage covered by the cleansing vehicles was 17,056 miles.

The total cost of the Cleansing Services during the year was £2915 3s. 5d.

Credits from various sources including the Sale of Salvaged Materials £244 3s 8d.

Refuse was disposed of on controlled tips at Frosterley, Thornley Village, Crawleyside, Cowshill and Rookhope.

RATS & MICE DESTRUCTION ACTS.

The Rodent Officer has been fully engaged during the year. Treatment of sewers and refuse tips was given periodically, and systematic block control of properties was undertaken.

Summary of year's work :-

	Number of Baiting points	Number of "takes"	Estimated kills per Ministry Formula
Sewers ...	290	28	210
Refuse Tips	166	49	443
House etc.	760	513	4115

Similar treatment was carried out for Tow Law Urban District Council by arrangement between the two Councils.

SHOPS ACT - Ventilation and Temperature

The usual inspections have been carried out and no action found necessary.

SMOKE ABATEMENT.

The district is fortunate in having few industries of the type usually associated with smoke nuisance and no action was found necessary during the year.

SANITARY INSPECTON OF AREA.

Nature of Inspections.	Number.	Notices Informal	Notices Formal.	Complied with
Infectious Diseases	37	0	0	0
Disinfection ...	37	0	0	0
Nuisances ...	5	4	0	4
Dwellings ...	57	12	0	12
Cowsheds ...	33	3	0	3
Sanitary accommodation	65	6	0	6
Water Supply ...	78	3	0	3
House Drainage ...	47	6	1	7
Other Nuisances ..	4	1	1	2

INSPECTION AND SUPERVISION OF FOOD.

(a) Milk Supply

Inspections were carried out in collaboration with County Officials and samples of milk were taken on six occasions after premises had been certified as suitable for producing "Designated" milk. Four "Tuberculin Tested" and two "Accredited" Producers licenses were granted by the County Medical Officer of Health.

Inspections were also carried out in connection with applications for registration to produce ordinary milk. One farm was registered during the year.

Number of Farms producing "Tuberculin Tested" Milk	20
Number of Farms producing "Accredited" Milk - -	17
Number of Farms on Register - - - - -	505

(b) Meat and Other Foods

No slaughtering for sale is done in the district under existing conditions.

Visits have been carried out to shops and stores in the district and these are generally well kept.

Food was condemned as unfit for sale or human consumption on twenty-eight instances. In each case the food was surrendered voluntarily under Ministry of Food Regulations.

There are five bakehouses in the district. These are clean and satisfactory.

SECTION D.

HOUSING.

27 traditional type houses were completed and occupied during the year under the Council's Housing Programme :-

Stanhope	...	4
Frosterley	...	5
Wolsingham	...	18

6 houses under Private Enterprise were also completed and occupied during the year.

1 additional home was provided by conversion and adaptation of other properties.

The total number of houses provided in the post-war period by the end of year was 49

Contracts were also let to builders for 44 houses comprising

Wolsingham	...	18
Stanhope	...	8
Westgate	...	14
St. John's Chapel		4

Of these work was in progress at Westgate, St. John's Chapel and Wolsingham at the end of the year.

Direct Labour Organisation.

The Council's own building force was augmented during the year and reached 29 men during the period.

Road and sewer works on sites were in hand at St. John's Chapel, Westgate. Rookhope, Stanhope, Frosterley and Wolsingham to the value of £26,215.

The Council also undertook the erection of Airey type Houses at Rookhope (8), Frosterley (20) and Stanhope (14) a total of 42 houses

Of these work was well advanced at Rookhope, while foundations and drains were in course of construction at Stanhope and Frosterley.

In view of the extra work entailed by such schemes the engagement of a temporary female clerk was approved and she took up her duties in May.

The stock of plant and equipment was increased during the year, particularly in respect of scaffolding. hand tools etc., while an extra concrete mixer and a second lorry were also purchased.

Section E.

Prevalence of, and control over, Infectious Disease.

I received 274 notifications during the year, these were as follows:—

Disease.	Total cases notified.	Cases admitted to Hospital.	Deaths.
Smallpox	0	0	0
Scarlet fever	36	36	0
Pneumonia	12	0	4
Measles	143	0	0
Diphtheria	0	0	0
Erysipelas	5	0	0
Whooping Cough	78	0	0
Para-Typhoid Fever	0	0	0
Puerperal Fever	0	0	0
Puerperal Pyrexia	0	0	0
Meningitis	0	0	0
Poliomyelitis	0	0	0
Total	274	36	4

DIPHTHERIA IMMUNISATION

From 5th. July, 1948 records of Immunisations done have been sent direct to the Durham County Council. Our records are therefore incomplete and the state of immunity on 31st December 1948 cannot be estimated.

On 30th. June, 1948 the state of immunisation was as follows :—

i	Up to 15 years	...	70.2% protected
ii.	5-15 years (school age)		74.6% ,,
iii.	Under 5 years	..	61 4% ,,

There were no cases of Diphtheria in this district during the year.

TUBERCULOSIS.

Age Periods.	New Cases.				Deaths.			
	Pulmonary		Non-Pulmonary		Pulmonary		Non-Pulmonary	
	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F
0								
1		1						
5	1							
15		1		1		1		
25	2	1			1			
35			1		1		1	
45				1				
55	3				1			
65 and upward ...	1							
Totals ...	7	3	1	2	3	1	1	0

In all 13 notifications were received. Of these, 10 were for Tuberculosis of the Lungs and 3 were for Tuberculosis of other parts of the body.

Of the 5 deaths due to Tuberculosis 4 were the result of Tuberculosis of the Lungs and 1 was of Tuberculosis of Kidney.

The Tuberculosis Death rate for the year was 0.55 per 1,000 population.

I am,

Yours obediently,

DONALD THOMSON.